

*Watch Hill Fire District
Watch Hill, R.I. 02891*

DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING

Friday, June 12, 2015

4:00 p.m.

Fire Station

222 Watch Hill Road

Watch Hill, RI

A meeting of the District Council of the Watch Hill Fire District was held at the Watch Hill Fire Station at 4:00 p.m. Friday, June 12, 2015.

The following members were present:

Charles S. Whitman III, Moderator
John M. Regan III, Deputy Moderator
Robert Murray, Treasurer
Paul Verbinnen, Finance Committee Chairman
Grant G. Simmons III, Chairman Park Commission
Robert Peacock, Fire Chief
Andrew Parsons, Member at Large
Ann Stevenson, Member at Large

Other voters present:

Judy O'Connell, Finance Committee

Also present were:

Judy Kelley, Fire District Office Manager

Proper notice having been given and a quorum being present, the Moderator, Charles S. Whitman III, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of May 22, 2015, which were previously circulated, were approved.

Finance Committee – Mr. Paul Verbinnen

Mr. Verbinnen reported that the final figures for the 2014-2015 budget year came in as expected. There will be a small change in the final budget given to voters, moving \$18,000 currently listed as excess into the category of surplus. This does not affect the bottom line. One other area of note was the overage of \$18,000 in the Napatree budget. Mr. Simmons will ask The Conservancy to reimburse the Fire District for this amount, in which case it will not be an overage but more a matter of timing of repayment, with the reimbursement coming into the next fiscal year. Mr. Verbinnen pointed out that the Fire District contribution to Napatree will be reduced to \$20,000 in the 2015-2016 year. The total budget amount will remain at \$90,000, with increased reimbursements from other sources to make up for the Fire District decrease and either further increases in reimbursements or a cut back in expenses to prevent an overage as occurred this year.

There was a discussion of how to increase the surplus reserves in anticipation of major capital projects to come. Mr. Parsons said he felt the planning committee had a good handle on the basic needs of the Fire Department as well as their wish list. They need to get firmer numbers for the Park Commission. At that point the Fire District Council will have to determine what is really needed and what sources of funding are available.

In answer to a question on the parking lot revenue, Mr. Simmons said the rate will be \$25 or more. The amount is tied to the rate being charged by the Holdredge Garage as well as the weather and traffic and is determined by the operators of the lot. The revenue budgeted in 2015-2016 is the same as in this past fiscal year.

After further discussion a motion was made to accept the 2015-2016 budget as presented. It was seconded and passed unanimously.

Treasurer – Mr. Robert Murray

Mr. Murray reported that the Fire District's cash position was good, with \$239,000 of unrestricted funds on hand as of 5/31/2015, a bit higher than last year, despite major outflows during May.

Mr. Murray reported that the State had changed the agreed upon procedures, requiring the Fire District to get approval to use their audit firm, which the Fire District has received, and a new list of mandatory procedures, which may result in increased accounting expenses. Mr. Murray is speaking with the accountant next week.

Park Commission – Mr. Grant G. Simmons III

Mr. Simmons reported that he has had an architect look at the bathhouses to determine what needs to be done so he can get a better handle on potential expenses. Similarly, Mr. Simmons is working with an engineer to get a project cost for the sea wall. A diver will be going in to do an underwater inspection right after July 4th. Mr. Simmons reported that the docks are in good shape and the HOB Yacht seems to be getting in lots of large boats, as usual. Lastly, Mr. Simmons advised that there is a fair amount of end of school year partying on the beach.

Fire Department – Robert Peacock

Chief Peacock reported that activity is starting to increase. There have already been two boat accidents; the Watch Hill Fire Department was the first responder both times. In the first case, they were on the scene to be certain the boat was not sinking. In the second case there was a serious injury. The Fire Department called in the Coast Guard and the Stonington police and provided the initial medical attention. Chief Peacock stated that the Department had been involved in the mill fire in Pawcatuck, sending the Cascade unit to the scene and the ladder truck to Westerly as back up. In answer to a question, Chief Peacock noted that the new fire truck has been out on calls but has not yet been literally involved in fighting a fire. However, he stated that the firemen have been using it for training and it is fully functional. Finally, Chief Peacock noted that the tenant at 36 Bay Street was complaining that the fire box was illegally on her property. In fact, it has been determined that the box is on the Town of Westerly right of way. Mr. Simmons has also spoken with this tenant.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Kelley
Office Manager